

**HEALTH COMMISSION
CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
Resolution No. 22-19**

Celebrating Hispanic and Latino/a/x Heritage Month

WHEREAS, September 15 to October 15 of each year is celebrated nationwide as National Hispanic and Latino Heritage Month. It traditionally honors the cultures and contributions of both Hispanic and Latino/a/x Americans as we celebrate heritage rooted in all Latin American countries; and

WHEREAS, the theme of the 2022 Hispanic and Latino Heritage Month is “Unidos: Inclusivity for a Stronger Nation.” The theme encourages everyone to ensure all voices are represented and welcomed to help build stronger communities and a stronger country; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Illy Soares, who developed this year’s theme stated, “Hispanics in the United States are a diverse group who bring a rich combination of language, culture, educational backgrounds, and experience to the great American experiment. This diverse background brings with it a wealth of ideas and perspectives. One unifying factor within our Hispanic community is our desire to be included and represented in all aspects of American society... We call on citizens of this nation from all walks of life to look around and welcome new voices to the table. This will help us build stronger communities and in turn, a stronger nation;” and

WHEREAS, Hispanic and Latino/a/x Heritage Month was originally observed as “Hispanic Heritage Week” under President Lyndon Johnson in 1968, and was later extended to a month during President Ronald Reagan’s tenure in 1988; and

WHEREAS, the month also celebrates the independence days of several Latin American countries, including: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua on September 15th, Mexico on September 16th, and Chile on September 18th; and

WHEREAS, The United States celebrates Indigenous People’s Day on October 12th, which falls within Hispanic and Latino/a/x Heritage month; and

WHEREAS, The Bureau of the Census estimates the Latino population living in the 50 States at more than 60,000,000 people, in addition to 3,200,000 people living in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, making Latin Americans 18.75 percent of the total population of the United States and the largest racial or ethnic minority group in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The 2020 Bureau of Census data indicates that the Latinx community is 40.2% of the population of California and 15.7% of the City and County of San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, Latino/a/x Americans have made, and continue to make, significant contributions to medical and public health fields, including:

- 1) Dr. Carlos Findlay was a Cuban-born physician, who discovered that yellow fever was transmitted through mosquitoes. In 1881, he correctly theorized that controlling the mosquito population would curtail outbreaks of yellow fever.

- 2) Dr. José Celso Barbosa Alcala was a Puerto Rican physician, sociologist and political leader, known as the father of the statehood movement in Puerto Rico. Barbosa was the first Puerto Rican, and one of the first persons of African descent, to earn a medical degree in the United States.
- 3) Severo Ochoa de Albornoz was a Spanish physician and biochemist, and joint winner of the 1959 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for discovering the synthesis of ribonucleic acid (RNA).
- 4) Ildaura Murillo-Rohde was a Panamanian nurse, professor, and organizational administrator. She founded the National Association of Hispanic Nurses in 1975. She specialized in psychiatric nursing and was named a Permanent UN Representative to UNICEF for the International Federation of Business and Professional Women.
- 5) Helen Rodríguez Trías was an American pediatrician, educator and women's rights activist. She was the first Latina president of the American Public Health Association (APHA), a founding member of the Women's Caucus of the APHA, and a recipient of the Presidential Citizens Medal. She is credited with helping to expand the range of public health services for women and children in minority and low-income populations around the world.
- 6) Jane L. Delgado is a Cuban-American clinical psychologist, health care advocate, non-profit executive, and author. She is president and CEO of the National Alliance for Hispanic Health.
- 7) Antonia Coello Novello, is a Puerto Rican physician and public health administrator. She was a vice admiral in the Public Health Service Commissioned Corps and served as the first woman and first Latina Surgeon General of the United States from 1990 to 1993.
- 8) Nora Volkow is a Mexican-American psychiatrist. She is currently the director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), which is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Her research has greatly contributed to the understanding of addiction.
- 9) Serena Maria Auñón-Chancellor, M.D. MPH, is physician and engineer. She is also the first Latina astronaut to visit the International Space Station.
- 10) Diana Ramos, MD, was appointed as the California Surgeon General on August 25, 2022. Dr. Ramos has more than three decades of medical experience with a focus on health equity and reproductive health.

WHEREAS, the San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) has been led by two innovative Latina Directors of Health: Sandra Hernandez, MD, and Barbara Garcia, and one dedicated and effective Health Officer, Tomas Aragon, MD, PhD; and

WHEREAS, When compared to non-Hispanic White populations, Latino/a/x communities across the country experience many health disparities including:

- 1) Latino/a/x individuals are twice as likely to die from liver or diabetes-related diseases. (2015)
- 2) Latino/a/x individuals are twice as likely to go to the emergency department for asthma-related symptoms. (2021)
- 3) Suicide attempts for Latina girls in grades 9-12 were 30% higher. (2021)
- 4) Latino men are four times more likely to receive an AIDS diagnosis. (2021)
- 5) Latinas were 80% less likely to receive prenatal care. (2019)
- 6) Latinas are 10% less likely to be screened for breast cancer. (2021)

- 7) Latino/a/x individuals were 50% less likely to have received mental health treatment. (2019)
- 8) Spanish-speaking Latino/a/x adults have lower rates of regular dental visits, fewer teeth, and overall lower quality of oral health. (2019)
- 9) Latino/a/x adults ages 50-75 are less likely to be screened for colorectal cancer. (2019)
- 10) One in six Latino/a/x individuals live in poverty. (2020)

WHEREAS, San Francisco Latino communities experience the following health disparities:

- 1) Latino/a/x individuals have been diagnosed with COVID-19 at a disproportionate rate compared to their percentage of the total San Francisco population. (2022)
- 2) Latinos-who-have-sex-with-men (MSM) have the second highest Monkey Pox case rate in San Francisco. (2022)
- 3) Latino/a/x individuals have the second highest rate of hospitalizations and emergency room visits due to Diabetes. (2019)
- 4) Latino/a/x individuals have the second highest rate of new HIV diagnoses. (2019)
- 5) Latina and Black and African American mothers experience higher rates of food insecurity than other groups. (2019)

WHEREAS, the Health Commission acknowledges and is deeply appreciative of the Latino/a/x community's partnership with the DPH in regard to developing and implementing effective strategies to address COVID-19 and Monkey Pox in the local Latino community; and

WHEREAS, Latina/o/x individuals living in the United States report experiencing widespread discrimination in health care and other areas of their lives, at significantly higher levels than White individuals. Being born in the United States and earning a college degree are not protective against this discrimination. (2019)

- One in five Latino/a/x individuals reported experiencing discrimination in clinical encounters, while 17 percent avoided seeking health care for themselves or family members due to anticipated discrimination.
- Approximately one third of Latino/a/x individuals reported experiencing discrimination with employment, housing, and police interactions.
- Latino/a/x individuals with college degrees had significantly higher odds of reporting discrimination in multiple domains than those without college degrees.

WHEREAS there remains much to be done to ensure that members of diverse Latino/a/x communities have access to resources and continue to participate and advance in the political landscape, including expanding leadership opportunities within the San Francisco Department of Public Health and San Francisco Health Commission; and

WHEREAS, the San Francisco Department of Public Health (DPH) developed its Racial Equity Action Plan to address health disparities and combat racism throughout the city's diverse communities and within the DPH, through activities impacting staff; and

WHEREAS, the Health Commission monitors the implementation of the DPH Racial Action Plan through quarterly updates provided by the Director of the DPH Office of Health Equity; and

WHEREAS celebrating Hispanic and Latino/a/x Heritage Month provides everyone an opportunity to recognize the achievements, contributions, and history of, and to understand the challenges faced by members of the diverse Latino/a/x communities.

NOW BE IT RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Health Commission recognizes the significance of Hispanic and Latino/a/x Heritage Month as an important time to celebrate and acknowledge the many contributions that Latino/a/x individuals have made, and continue to make in our community, state, and country; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, the San Francisco Health Commission recognizes that Latino/a/x communities enhance the rich diversity of, and strengthen the City of San Francisco.

I hereby certify that the San Francisco Health Commission adopted the foregoing resolution at its September 6, 2022 meeting.

Mark Morewitz, M.S.W.
Health Commission Secretary